taken against the staff found indulging in such malpractice. In addition, touts apprehended are prosecuted as per provisions of law.

Committee for passenger amenities at Station

1935. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railway platforms and railway compartments are in a very poor state of hygiene and taps are dry both on the platforms and in the bogies, thereby causing a lot of inconvenience to the passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Railways propose to appoint a Committee to go into these problems and to suggest ways and means of improving the sanitation conditions on the Railways; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Cleanlines and maintenance of amenities including tap water supply at stations and trains is a continuous process and is carried out regularly and any deficiency found is promptly attended to for rectification. Regular inspections are conducted at railway stations and trains to monitor and identify weak areas and take remedial measures.

(c) and (d) Besides regular checks, there is a system of periodic inspections by multi-disciplinary Service Improvement Groups of appropriate level to monitor upkeep of amenities including cleanliness and take immediate corrective action. Suitable action is taken against the staff/ agency who are found wanting in the performance of their duties for maintaining proper cleanliness at railway stations and trains. At present there is no proposal for appointment of a committee.

Incidents of robbery and terrorism in trains

† 1936. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a spurt in the incidents of robbery and terrorism in the trains during the recent past;

(b) if so, whether Government would taken any action to check the incidents of robbery and to get rid of the difficulties having faced by the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

passengers in the trains passing through the terrorism and naxal affected areas; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. There has been an increase in the crime under the head robbery/dacoity and terrorist attacks in trains during the last six months *i.e.* January to June, 2006 in comparison to the previous six months of the preceding year.

(b) and (c) To provide better security to the traveling passengers in trains and passenger areas, the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957 and the Railways Act, 1989 have been amended to enable the Railways, through the Railway Protection Force, to effectively supplement the efforts of the State Governments in controlling crime on the Railways. The Railway Protection Force staff are being deployed to escort many trains and also in the passengers area to augment the efforts of the State Governments. Railway Protection Force has also been empowerd to deal with the minor offences affecting the train operations such as alarm chain pulling, roof travel, touting, tickets less travel, unauthorized entry into coaches earmarked for ladies etc. (except Sabotage related offences under Sections 150 to 152) with the amendment to the Railways Act, 1989 *w.e.f.* July 2004. The objective was to ensure that the State Police (Government Railway Police) get more manpower and time to handle heinous offences such as Murder, Dacoity, Robbery, Rape etc. including Sabotage and Train Wrecking, under the provisions of Indian Penal Code, the Railways Act and other laws of the land.

The following measures are being taken to strengthen the security arrangements in trains and Railway premises over Zonal Railways:—

1. Intensive publicity and public awareness campaigns alerting and educating all passengers/public to remain vigilant against any identified/unclaimed suspicious objects lying on platforms, other premises or coaches and report to Railway Protection Force/ Government Railway Police/Railway officials available nearby.
2. Frequent announcements at all stations alerting passengers to be vigilant about suspicious movement of co-passengers and not to touch any suspicious luggage/ bag especially in general compartments.

3. Utilization of Dog Squads at sensitive and important Railway stations and in trains.

4. Surprise checks in co-ordination with Government Railway Police, State Police and Intelligence agencies.

5. Surprise checks of luggage and parcels by Railway officials in trains and stations in co-ordination with Government Railway Police.

6. Steps to prevent entry of unauthorized persons in trains and in empty coaching rakes at originating/destination stations, before and after placement in maintenance sidings.

7. Close co-ordination with Government Railway Police/State Police/ Central Intelligence agencies to prevent any untoward incident.

8. Contingency plans are being drawn at Divisional (Railway) level to respond effectively to the contingencies arising out of sudden bomb blasts on the Railway system in conjunction with the Government Railway Police and the State Police.

9. Coordination mechanism at the Division and Zonal levels is being institutionalized.

Bids to refurbish public utilities

1937. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are all to invite bids to refurbish public utilities on a Renovate-Operate-Transfer (ROT) basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the proposal is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Instructions have been issued to upgrade toilets at Railway stations on Renovate-Operate-Transfer (ROT) basis by involving private agencies. No time frame has been stipulated.